

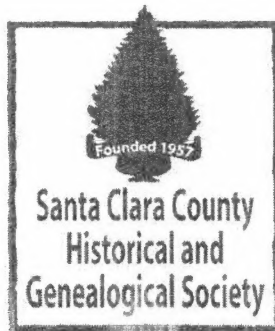
Alviso, Santa Clara County

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Written as part of the Federal Writers' Project, a Works Progress
Administration (WPA) Project, 1936

Notes:

- Original in possession of the Santa Clara County Archives, San Jose, California
- Scanned by the Santa Clara Historical and Genealogical Society



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In the early days of the Santa Clara Valley almost all imports and exports had to come in and go out by water, and Alviso at the head of the south arm of San Francisco Bay, nine miles from San Jose, became an important town and the port of the valley. Alviso was incorporated in 1852 and claims to hold the oldest city charter granted by the state of California, but it was allowed to lapse; renewed later. The municipality is still existent, the oldest incorporated town in California.

It was from Alviso that the quicksilver went out to the world markets from the New Almaden Mines. Hides, tallow, wheat, barley, and hay were also shipped from Alviso's port; large warehouses were built there, and several fine homes, including that of Peter Burnett, first governor.

In the late 80s when boom days came to California and transcontinental railroads ran excursions into California on one dollar tickets for the trip, San Jose and the valley experienced a boom; railroads were built and one of these ran through Alviso. This put water shipping almost out of business.

It was at this time that a townsite called New Chicago was platted near Alviso and lots sold at auction. Many different enterprises were incorporated and a lot of stock speculation ensued. Among such enterprises was that of a watch factory which was built in New Chicago. It was a large three-story affair practically thrown together, and it lasted long enough as a manufacturing industry to produce just ^{seven} ~~one~~ watches, ~~and whether or not~~
~~this watch was of the Waterbury sort history fails to record, but~~

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that watch factory was a joke of the section for many years afterward, as was also New Chicago. Money was sunk in lots over which the tides ebbed and flowed daily, and the end of it all is written in the sales for delinquent taxes marking the records of the county.

About 1916 The Morning Times of San Jose which flourished for a period, as have many other long gone newspapers of the valley, aroused interest in the matter of Port San Jose which was centered at Alviso, at the head of the Guadalupe channel. A strip of land 150 feet in width was taken into the city by votes of the people from San Jose and Alviso. The state legislature ratified the action of the people of San Jose and of the town of Alviso, which also voted to give over a section of land surrounding the head of the Guadalupe for improvement of the port with warehouses, and for the dredging of the channel, forming of a turning basin and other improvements. An appropriation was made by Congress for the work of improving and widening the channel and the outer bay arm down to the Dumbarton bridge. But, railroad and other interests brought pressure to bear, and the whole project lapsed; however, the legislative acts still exist unrepealed, and the city of San Jose is still holder of the territory annexed.

The South Bay Yacht Club, organized in San Jose, has its club house at Alviso. Many local yachting sportsmen own boats, and the summer season sees much activity in sailing.

Today Alviso is being improved by a levy system surrounding the town, put in under WPA supervision, and considerable

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activity has been shown in reviving the port matter, a port district formed, and efforts made to secure government aid in developing the port. But, the old Alviso of busy water shipping days is just a small village, really, and its main industry is the Bay Side Canning Company, which operates only in the active fruit and vegetable canning season.

AUTHORITIES:

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